

Chapter No. 2109
19/SS26/R1224
LR 17B/LR

***SENATE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
No. 557***

Originated in Senate  Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 557

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING DR. LONDON BRANCH, FOUNDER OF THE JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, FOR HIS OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIELD OF MUSIC AS A RECIPIENT OF THE 2019 GOVERNOR'S ARTS AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN MUSIC AND EDUCATION.

WHEREAS, Dr. London Branch is an accomplished Classical and Jazz Musician as well as a Music Educator. He is the founder of Jackson State University (JSU) Symphony Orchestra. Dr. Branch taught at JSU for more than three decades, performed for 25 years with the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra as a Jazz Bassist, and was the first African-American to be a Guest Conductor with the Mississippi All-State Orchestra in 1984; and

WHEREAS, music has been a central part of Dr. London Branch's life as long as he can remember, and he has spent almost 80 years both playing and teaching it. Born in Galveston, Texas, and raised in Chicago by a family of music lovers, Branch fell in love with jazz at an early age. He excelled at the trumpet, but was a quick study on several instruments, eventually settling on the upright bass as his main musical tool; and

WHEREAS, his quick-learning ability translated to a knack for teaching music to others, teaching countless students from grade school through graduate school. He began teaching in 1960 as the Band Director at the Illinois State Training School for Boys at St. Charles, Illinois, and maintained an active schedule playing in jazz groups in the Chicago area. He soon attended Southern Illinois University at Carbondale where, as a graduate student, he taught a jazz survey course. In 1973, Dr. Branch was recruited to teach at Mississippi Valley State University where he developed a major in "Jazz and Commercial Music." Within three years, more than 50 students from all around the country were enrolled in the program at Valley State; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Branch arrived at Jackson State University in 1984 with the mission of creating a symphony orchestra. After building this program from scratch, Dr. Branch led the orchestra for 20 years, performing concerts from Georgia to Texas. Many of his students have gone on to careers in music performance or education; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Branch also continued a lifelong career of performing as a jazz bassist with many great musicians, including Clark Terry, Alvin Fielder, Milt Hinton and Kenny Burrell. He pioneered jazz improvisation in Mississippi with the group MoBiTra. He was a member of the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra for almost 25 years and was the first African-American member of the Chattanooga Symphony; and

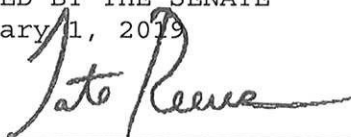
WHEREAS, though retired from academia, he still teaches individual lessons at his home studio; and

WHEREAS, we pay tribute to a most public-spirited Mississippi citizen, professional Jazz Musician and Music Educator:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby recognize Dr. London Branch, founder of the Jackson State University Symphony Orchestra, for his outstanding contributions to the field of music as a recipient of the 2019 Governor's Arts Award for Excellence in Music and Education.

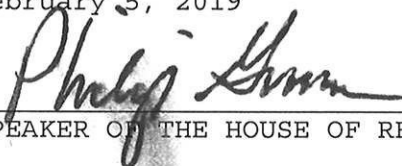
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Dr. London Branch and his family, forwarded to the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning and the Governor, and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
February 1, 2019



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
February 5, 2019



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES